

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A shoe press belt endlessly formed by an elastic material, wherein a plurality of drains are formed ~~on the outer peripheral surface of said shoe press belt along the peripheral direction of said shoe press belt, and in a pressurizing region which extends from a central pressurizing portion towards end pressurizing portions in the width direction of the shoe press belt,~~ the depths of said drains are being progressively increased from the a-central pressurizing portion toward end pressurizing portions of said shoe press belt.

2. (Currently Amended) The shoe press belt according to claim 1, wherein the depths of said drains are progressively increased from said central pressurizing portion toward said end pressurizing portions of said shoe press belt by at least one type of technique ~~among~~ selected from the group consisting of a curve technique, a linear technique, a stepped technique and a trapezoidal technique.

3. (Previously Presented) The shoe press belt according to claim 1, wherein the depths of said drains are so progressively increased that the depth of the deepest drain formed in a pressurizing region of said shoe press belt is 1.05 to 3.0 times the depth of the shallowest drain formed in said pressurizing region.

4. (Currently Amended) The shoe press belt according to claim 1, wherein the thickness of said shoe press belt is progressively reduced from said central pressurizing portion ~~toward~~ to said end pressurizing portions of said shoe press belt.

5. (Currently Amended) A shoe press comprising at least the shoe press belt according to claim 1, a pressure shoe adapted to apply ~~applying~~ pressure to said shoe press belt and pressure regulation means for regulating the pressure of said pressure shoe.